

Ref. No: 1262
Date: 09/10/24
Subject: Epidurals

REQUEST

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request information about epidurals requested by women in labour.

Please provide the following information broken down by each full calendar year 2019-2023 inclusive, and all available information for the calendar year 2024 so far:

1. The total number of women in labour who requested an epidural for pain relief
2. The total number of women in labour who received an epidural for pain relief
3. The number of women who did not receive the epidural requested
4. The number of women who received the epidural within 30 minutes of making the request (0-30 minutes inclusive)
5. The number of women who received the epidural within 60 minutes of making the request (0-60 minutes inclusive)
6. The number of women who received the epidural later than 60 minutes after making the request (61 minutes and above)
7. The longest recorded epidural waiting time

These figures should not include women who received an epidural during a planned or emergency Caesarean section.

RESPONSE

1. **The total number of women in labour who requested an epidural for pain relief**
This information is not collected See Section 12 exemption below.

2. The total number of women in labour who received an epidural for pain relief

Calendar Year	Total Epidurals for pain relief only
2019	664
2020	665
2021	829
2022	884
2023	820
2024 (Jan to Oct)	595*

*Please note the data for 2024 has been compiled from both our maternity sites for Ormskirk the data is from January to October and the data from the Whiston site is from January 2024 to September 2024 This is the most up to date information available.

3. The number of women who did not receive the epidural requested.
This information is not collected See Section 12 exemption below.

4. The number of women who received the epidural within 30 minutes of making the request (0-30 minutes inclusive)
This information is not collected See Section 12 exemption below.

5. The number of women who received the epidural within 60 minutes of making the request (0-60 minutes inclusive)
This information is not collected See exemption applied below.

6. The number of women who received the epidural later than 60 minutes after making the request (61 minutes and above)
This information is not collected See Section 12 exemption below.

7. The longest recorded epidural waiting time
This information is not collected See Section 12 exemption below.

Response Q1,3,4,5,6,and 7

Section 12 of the FOIA allows a public authority to refuse a request where it estimates that it would exceed the appropriate limit to comply with the request. The relevant section states:

12. (1) - Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

where the appropriate limit is equal to 18 hours of staff time as set by the *Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004*

In determining the time limit, the Trust can only take into account

- determining whether the information is held;
- locating the information, or a document containing it;
- retrieving the information, or a document containing it; and
- extracting the information from a document containing it.

In order to determine whether the information is held in respect of your request, the Trust would need to locate and **review** approximately 17500 individual written medical records and it is estimated this will take 6 minutes to locate and review the paper records. A simple report cannot be produced as there is not a specific code relating to epidurals.

Calculation - Across the Trust there were approximately 17500 patients and records to be reviewed during the request period. It is estimated that it will take 6 minutes to locate and review the individual records the total time for determining whether the information is held and retrieving this information would equal 1882 hours¹

Advice and Assistance

Under section 16 of the FOIA, advice and assistance should be provided to allow the request to come under the appropriate limit by scaling or modifying the request.

Unable to narrow.

However, as the information is not readily available and the number of attendances so large, it would not be easy to scale down the request in this instance, for example, to one year, as this would still exceed the time limit.

Unfortunately, the Trust is unable to provide further assistance in this instance.

¹ 17500 attendances * 6 minute to review each event = 112920 minutes
112920 minutes = 1882 hours,